including the relation between the text's history and the development of the god/cult. Kleeman devotes a section (8–16) to the religious technique of revelation via spirit writing (*fuji* 扶乩, "wielding the stylus," or *fuluan* 扶鸞, "wielding the phoenix"), since, as mentioned above, the *Book of Transformations* is said to have been dictated by the god in just this fashion. He also includes a comparative survey of other revealed texts that relate to the *Book of Transformations*. Kleeman's discussion of the *Book* itself is well researched and detailed, and contains a wealth of information that provides a fine background for the following translation. Aspects of the topic that lie beyond the defined scope of the book have been addressed by the author elsewhere to some extent (see the bibliography, 309–10).

Kleeman has rendered the *Wendi huashu* into carefully phrased English; in particular, the elegant literary phrasing of the parallel sentences at the beginning of each chapter shows a mastery of the complex literary, philological, and technical aspects of the work, the difficulty of which is amply revealed in the extensive commentaries and annotations.

The bibliography lists an impressive number of works up to 1994, although there is among the secondary works a slight underrepresentation of non-English European titles, as is sometimes the case with publications by Americans. The book is well edited, and the few slips and typos I noticed in no way affect the pleasure of reading it.

A God's Own Tale is a fine study that enriches our understanding of the Wenchang cult and its lore and legend. Anyone interested in the many themes and topics treated by the author will benefit from this work, which demonstrates the degree of sophistication that the field of textual studies in Chinese religions has reached.

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LIU CHIH-WAN. 劉　枝萬. *Taiwan no dōkyō to minkan shinkō* 台湾の道教と民間信仰 [Daoism and folk belief in Taiwan]. Tokyo: Fukyōsha, 1994. 466 pages. Plates (7 in color, 75 black/white), maps, tables, indices. Cloth Yen 8,240. ISBN 4–938718–02–2. (In Japanese)

In contrast to what the title would lead one to expect, this book covers many aspects of traditional Chinese religion, not only on Taiwan but in mainland China as well. Author Liu Chih-Wan draws both on his own research data and on an extensive study of traditional Chinese texts, making this a study of truly wide scope.

Taiwan no dōkyō to minzoku shinkō consists of five sections. In the introductory part Liu summarizes the history of Daoism and the background of religious specialists and festivals. He emphasizes that Daoism is deeply engrained in the lives of the Chinese people, but that its rituals and festivals are too varied and complex for an exhaustive analysis.

In part 1 Liu deals with the history of Daoism, utilizing traditional texts from both Taiwan and mainland China in an examination of the three topics of shamanism, Thunder God worship, and Tian-feng-shen 天蓬神. According to Liu, shamanism in ancient times had great political influence but gradually lost it while gaining a new position in Daoism and folk belief. Worship of the Thunder God, Lei-shen 雷神, who can exorcise evil spirits, is based on the belief in *tian* 天, Heaven. Descriptions of Lei-shen are found in many folktales and novels. Tian-feng-shen is a Daoist god with strong magical powers who for more than a thousand years has been widely worshipped in Chinese society, but whose origins are very difficult to trace. In this first part Liu shows that Daoism draws from many legends, folktales, and texts, and that it is not easy to clarify exactly what it is that Daoism worships.

The second part deals with Daoism and folk belief in Taiwan specifically. From the seventeenth century many Chinese emigrated to Taiwan from the southeastern coast of

China, a fact reflected in certain trends of Taiwanese folk belief. For example, many ghostly gods, *gui-shen* 鬼神, are worshipped in Taiwan, and even now various kinds of spirit-mediums play an active role in popular belief. Religious specialists fall into three classes: Daoist priests, who belong to the Tian-shi sect of southern China and who perform rituals, ceremonies, and also magical exorcism; the *fo-shi*, a lower group of priests who engage in exorcism colored with Buddhism; and the spirit-mediums. The spirit-mediums, for their part, are further divided into the *tang-ki* 童乩, who can communicate with the gods, the *ang-yi* 尪姨, who can communicate with the dead, and the *fu-ki* 扶乩, who can relate messages from supernatural beings through automatic writing. These spirit-mediums offer an important key to the understanding of Taiwanese folk belief and, even more important, of shamanism in Asia. Following this description Liu explains that the rather confusing situation in Taiwan stems from the organizational weakness of Daoism and from the nature of Taiwanese society as a frontier society. In a frontier situation people are concerned with the community's well-being, so that many of the rituals are directed to this.

In part 3 Liu analyzes beliefs and rituals relating to the human soul. According to him Chinese people traditionally believe that the human body is the house of the soul. As the result of such mishaps as sickness and injury the human soul leaves the body; death is the final separation of the two. The spirits of the dead are believed to be polluted and are thought to attract other evil spirits. Thus in funeral rites the separation and purification of the dead body and soul are repeated several times. In the course of this process the dead spirit is thought to transform into an ancestral spirit.

Part 4 deals with calendrical rites having their origin in Daoism and folk belief. These are agricultural rites or rites to celebrate the birthday of gods. Since Daoism is typified by polytheism there are many gods that have become the object of people's worship. But in general the actual number of gods worshipped is rather limited, with some gods being venerated everywhere that Chinese live. Agricultural rites are, of course, deeply connected with agrarian tradition. Liu says that while these rites have continued through many centuries, they also show great regional variation.

As mentioned above, Liu notes the plurality of Chinese religion and admits the difficulty of analyzing it properly. This is especially true for folk belief, which is deeply rooted in daily life, is strongly influenced by Daoism and Buddhism, and is practiced by many sorts of religious specialists. He thus advocates an approach based on fieldwork combined with the study of texts, believing this to be the most effective method of researching a highly civilized society like that of the Chinese. Liu successfully utilizes this approach in his presentation of the history of Chinese religion and in his explanation of the historical relation between Daoism and folk belief. Some problems remain, however. The first regards the use of records. Historical texts are inevitably influenced to some extent by the political ideology prevalent at the time they were written, and this must be taken into account when referring to them. Liu gives no methodology for doing so, however. The second problem regards the definition of China and its culture. To use data from various regions without first clarifying the cultural context of that data makes it quite difficult to draw accurate conclusions. Liu appears not to have considered this problem either. Both of these issues must be more deeply examined in future studies on Chinese religious traditions.

Chinese religion has often been thought of as highly syncretistic, mixing Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (SASAKI 1986). Liu, however, posits another category of religion, which he calls folk belief. By this he means the beliefs, rituals, and worship of the common people and not of the religious specialists. But problems remain. Daoism is complex and, as many researchers have pointed out, is rooted in a variety of legends, folktales, rituals, and beliefs; it is, in addition, influenced by Buddhism (KUBO 1983). Thus one might ask, What is folk belief? And further, What is Daoism? I do not believe that it is necessary to separate the two traditions in order to analyze them, since folk belief cannot exist without Daoism and Daoism cannot exist without folk belief. The most important thing is to realize the diversity of Chinese religion. An understanding of the significance of diversity in Chinese religion is,

I believe, the key to understanding the Chinese and their culture. Liu's book provides a good example of such an approach.

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VIETNAM

NGUYEN DINH THAM. *Studies on Vietnamese Language and Literature: A Preliminary Bibliography*. Southeast Asia Program Series 10. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. 228 pages. Paper US$15.00; ISBN 0–87727–127–5.

During the Vietnam War, tens of millions of dollars were spent by the U.S. government on surveys, interviews, field studies, and documentary translations, all designed to inform the higher government echelons about the Vietnamese enemy and the immediate sociopolitical context in which the conflict was being waged. Officials who allocated such monies did not consider the study of Vietnam's language and literature relevant to achieving victory. Inside American universities, meanwhile, several hundred Ph.D. dissertations about Vietnam were produced in the disciplines of political science, history, and applied education, yet only a handful were written in the fields of linguistics and literature. Following the end of the war in 1975, U.S. government funds for studying anything about Vietnam dried up completely; this was mirrored in the universities, where no more than five or six acknowledged specialists managed to hang on to academic positions, and a whole generation of graduate students avoided Vietnam like the plague.

From about 1988 interest in Vietnam began to revive in the United States, although still focusing on the American experience in the war. By 1992 Vietnam had almost become the flavor-of-the-month, with economists, development studies experts, commercial lawyers, and management specialists enjoying the highest profiles. Many of these American academics were retreads from China studies, but by 1995 the background profile was more diverse, and other disciplines were represented, notably anthropology, history, archaeology, and demography. Even linguistics and literature gained a foothold.

Studies on Vietnamese Language and Literature appears to be the fruit of one Vietnamese migrant laboring assiduously in Montreal since 1975, launching bibliographical sorties on major library collections, compiling a personal card file, and eventually gaining the attention of established scholars at the Cornell Southeast Asia Program. We cannot be sure, since the compiler, Nguyen Dinh Tham, provides no background to his project. It would have been nice if Mr. Tham had included a brief introduction to his bibliography telling us, for example, how and where the data was collected, specifying his criteria for including or excluding items, explaining how he delineates "literature" from "folk literature," and maybe even offering readers a few pages on how Western interest in Vietnamese language and literature began and was sustained in the more than three centuries since Fr. Alexandre de Rhodes published his Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary in Rome (entry 138).

Whatever its genesis, *Studies on Vietnamese Language and Literature* is a valuable biblio-